

Center for Shared Prosperity

Executive Summary

Community Partner: Jordan Mroziak

Student Consulting Team: Pranav Addepalli, David Matovic, Sean Pham, Dillon Shu

Background

The Center for Shared Prosperity, or CSP, is an organization with the goal of “reducing structural barriers to equitable prosperity in the Pittsburgh region”. In order to achieve this, the CSP hopes to create a sustainable and replicable model for collaboration between Carnegie Mellon University and the Greater Pittsburgh community. The CSP leverages the resources available to CMU, whether its funding or world-class researchers, in order to address issues within the community.

Project Description

Project Opportunity

The main problem faced by the CSP is that people in the Pittsburgh community are not engaging and interacting with local businesses in the area. This problem consists of four parts: Information, Hesitancy/Trust, Convenience, and Financial Incentives. Ultimately, the value proposition in the long term is to increase community engagement with local small businesses. This was achieved by creating a way for the CSP to effectively display business information and establishing workflows for CSP businesses to bring their goods and services to CMU campus.

Project Vision

The Center for Shared Prosperity aims to reduce structural barriers to equitable prosperity in the Pittsburgh region. In order to help achieve this, the CMU IS student team created a website to showcase local minority businesses to students and also made a process document that covers how to host a local business on campus. Both of these deliverables are part of an initiative to increase CMU engagement with local businesses, both in terms of awareness and spending.

Project Outcomes

People Outcomes:

Students, faculty, and other members of the CMU community are now able to use the website to learn about local businesses in Pittsburgh as well as get in contact with the CSP. The client is also able to update the website with new business data. Coordinators and event owners, including Spring Carnival, are aware of the CSP and will be collaborating in the future.

Process Outcomes:

The process document outlines ways for the CSP to host events at CMU with local businesses, as well as plans for future financial incentive programs. The website also has documentation for CSP employees to learn how to edit the website.

Technology Outcomes:

The website allows students and CMU staff explore local businesses and the products/services they offer. The website utilizes user-centered design and search functionality to help users find information about local businesses quickly and easily. It is built on Wix ensuring reliability while offering additional functionality such as website usage dashboards, database hosting, and an easy way to make changes to it in the future, if necessary.

Project Deliverables

Website: The CMU IS team developed and deployed a website that showcases local businesses and the products/services they offer. This live website is easily accessible for students and has the information a student needs when considering potentially visiting a local business.

Process Document: A document that provides an outline of important information for hosting a local business on the CMU campus. This includes but is not limited to an explanation on why hosting businesses on campus is beneficial, factors to consider when hosting a business on campus, where/how to reserve spaces in buildings and outside and potential financial incentives the CSP could provide students.

Recommendations

In order to get students to spend more with local minoritized businesses, we recommend that the CSP hosts local businesses on campus and when possible, offer financial incentives to students to encourage local spending. We believe that the issue stems from lack of student awareness, trust, convenience, and financial incentives to shop at a local business as opposed to a corporate chain. The process document the team has provided should assist in hosting events on campus. We also recommend that the CSP continue to update the website the team built this semester with up-to-date information about local businesses. The CSP should also make attempts to advertise the website, which can be done by providing financial incentives or hosting local businesses in public places on campus.

Student Consulting Team

Pranav Addepalli served as a product designer. He is a third-year Information Systems major with an additional major in Human-Computer Interaction and a minor in Computer Science.

David Matovic served as a product manager. He is a third-year Information Systems student with a minor in Human-Computer Interaction.

Sean Pham served as website developer. He is a third-year Information Systems major with a Computer Science minor.

Dillon Shu served as project manager. He is a fourth-year student majoring in Information Systems with a minor in Information Security, Privacy, and Policy.